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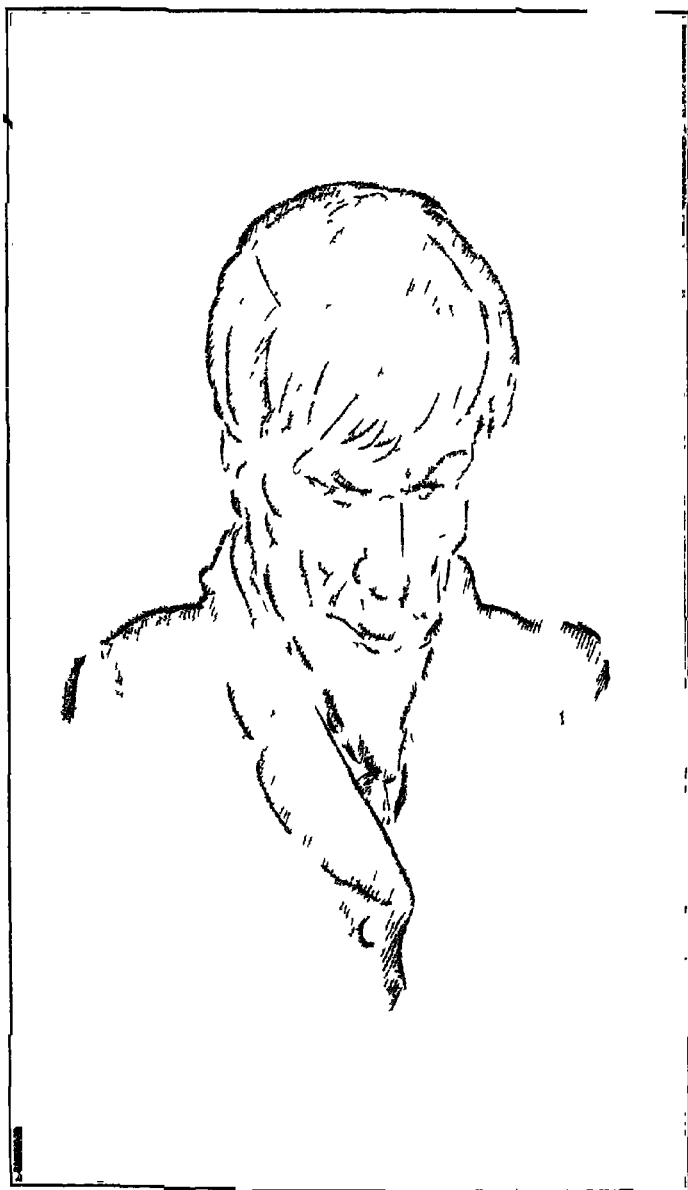
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D. H. LAWRENCE
and the
BODY MYSTICAL



DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE

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and the
BODY MYSTICAL

by
Frederick
Carter

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D. H. LAWRENCE AND THE BODY MYSTICAL

It would seem that an important and very significant side of D. H. Lawrence's genius will escape comment because of the tendency to other prepossessions in his critics and eulogists. They look out other principles, other motives in him. In short, they ignore one quite considerable side to his thought. Not that he did not declare it. But they shy in a scared way at his fantasia of opinions upon psychology. Too much of magic, theosopher and medicine-man in his cosmos for their comfort.

At different periods I had occasion to discuss his theories upon the psyche with him and compare opinions upon the significance of old myths and traditions. And whilst he was staying with me for a little while in Shropshire, we considered means for the development of a certain line of research in symbolism, and the publication of some essays and a book or two about ancient ideas on the soul and their permanent validity, and of the problem of the last end of the world.

The first fruit of our conversation—an essay preliminary—was an article, written by me, on "The Antique Science of Astrology" and one or two articles on man and cosmos by Lawrence, all published in the *Adelphi Magazine* in the early part of 1924. More would have followed—for example, one on the Sacred Art of Alchemy—but serious business difficulties in America called him back there. And so

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fell through the whole scheme which he had in mind for a publishing office of books to be established in London and, beyond that, a society of students to live and work in New Mexico, on the farm at Questa, near Taos.

He stayed abroad for a long time ; the lack of sun in England he hated, the damp he feared. He liked the south and for the time liked America—Mexico was the place he most admired. There, he declared, was the coming centre of the new world civilization. In Mexico was being consummated the blood inter-fusion which came from the free meeting of all races, South-European, American-Indian and African-Negro. He liked the idea of that. A new dominating strain was in making, and war and strife and revolt were the effervescence of its integration, for the old strains had lost their responsive vitality and must be destroyed, the old world had reached its final term.

It interested him deeply that the old notion of the signs of the Zodiac as part of the arrangement of the great year, now indicated the near ending of our age. A little while yet and then the sun will open the year in a new sign. He saw the days of prophecy with us and the need for a declaration of the new dawn.

Moreover, the predominance of the dragon in the old Mexican symbolism—the dragon god—in its figure of the plumed serpent had vastly taken his imagination. The celestial significance of the dragon gave cosmic purport to the myth and the inward sense of it, as part of the fundamental ego of man, gave it a psychological purpose which brought the myth of Man and the stars very near to the subject of his enquiries.

He desired to see a book appear on the dragon and the man, telling of the myth of the oldest things and

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having the root, as he felt, of a deep principle in psychology in it.

The great urgency, the call, the appeal, the peculiar penetration in David Herbert Lawrence's writing came from its mysticism. This may seem a hard saying since it has been declared, with such weight of authority, that this was the subject in which his usual clarity of thought and speech foundered. He was said to be a bore then; but it may be that the hearer's ears were stopped—it may be.

Well, it is necessary in these days when the very word mysticism has been confoundedly confused by certain exponents, and when, what between the practitioners of a kind of juggling magic or necromancy and those who claim it as the appanage of a single cult, its significance has been swamped in a writhing torment of monstrous fancies—more than ever now, it is necessary for some strong voice to declare that the mystic seeks, simply, the method of approach in man's intimate relation with the universal. That it is a problem of passion and desire and *not* merely a point of view must be understood however, for great mystics have belonged to every real religion.

In short, mysticism is the means through which man seeks within himself the secret springs of life that are common to all things alive, existing in the greatest as in the least. It seeks, too, the very extent of life, finding a kinship and the stirrings of a mutual state of being in unsuspected places. Contemplative, the mind withdraws from too close contact, the better to envisage the rushing stream of existence. Outside runs the great tide of life, perpetually changing into unanticipated transformations. But within man, moves also a great river of thoughts and images,

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pouring along in a similar motion—like, but with its own conditions. This is the interior world, full of dangers because so little known, unstable, changeful, haunted because so vaguely explored. The waste kingdom of man.

Amidst these swirling currents of external event and inward image, buffeted without and within, the true man must find himself. And it is far from simple this self-searching. Very many are the paths propounded by those who profess to define for the soul the significant cartography of its way into life and to tell its relationship with all the world about it.

Lawrence had made no clear definition of method, but he came with strange stories of the things he had discovered. He had explored for himself, had found himself, had lost himself. Ardently would he discuss the ways and he was urgent to know the roads and the means for that inward experiment called the mystical journey towards God.

Yet, unless he is considered in relation to his youthful environment and his own folk he is hard to understand. For his religious education in boyhood was Nonconformist, and what it gave to him in the tough strength to pose questions, was weighted by the early repressions which made him react, in a violence of negation, towards anything that belonged to tradition. Nothing of that kind was to be accepted unquestioned. All traditionalism was accused and condemned. It suggested a broad, well-beaten path, an easy way. The way he never would, nor ever could, take.

Sad is this spectacle of a pietistic society that, in spite of threat and persecution, has projected its demand for religious liberty, which yet has in itself

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arranged to constrict the lives and thoughts of its own family groups within bonds of unsocial severity. That was the nature of the soil from which he sprang and its torments abode with him. It was hard and unyielding.

Much of that sense of resentment for which his writing was reproached belonged, rather, to the stress of wrenching away constricting fibres that had grown up in him from that inheritance. To Lawrence the whole social order of England seemed to have a clinched-down tightness—to be deformed by that gripping clutch for a handhold on power. Catholicism he saw as a mere extension of this system, and the priest he feared and resented as parson enhanced to a dreadful degree.

Brought up as a frail boy, a homekeeping child, needing care and shelter from the rough outworld, he was a mother's boy. All his work betrays the feminine outlook. Always seen from the vicinity of a woman's skirts, one recognizes there the lad at his mother's apron strings, the little pitcher with long ears. He had first seen the world at large through women's eyes, heard their accounts of it, known it by their gossip, and he went on weighing life with their scales and values.

So all his life he would see the world from the feminine angle amazingly, almost too much so. It was indeed, to his disadvantage as a man, often disturbing his true balance of thought and perception. And from those beginnings he retained that alert ear for women's conversation and also, often enough, power to reveal their way of turning over and recounting talk, penetrating to disguised motives by seeking out obscure intentions behind simple acts.

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Ensuing on this concentration of interest towards the woman, his menfolk always suffer somewhat in clarity. In fact, generally they take on a silent withdrawn attitude and sombrely regard the feminine strife of wits. How often he describes the female's assault upon the man, showing him as darkling and obscure in his resistance or acceptance. Man as he tells of him is instinctively distrustful of all outside himself, of all that endeavours to take him outside his own entity. He has an integrity to protect. But he never gives his reasons for it.

He cannot explain himself, this male of Lawrence's books, nor does he endeavour to think things out at all persistently. These men of his seem to set themselves deliberately in resistance. In the affairs of sex they are baffling and tense. He—in them—finds it hard to express feelings in speech. All their talk about the other sex has a faint inflexion of jeers. But his women discussing men are in earnest. . . .

With all his power—the power of a perception of genius—he proclaims the soul which is the woman's. When he cries out for the fiery dark and the life in the blood he really means that the bosom of the Great Mother is his longing. He is her priest and would be her hierophant. Perhaps it was against his conscious will. No wonder that the American girl, who had purchased a copy of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* from the bookshop of his Paris publisher, returned to say, "Tell Mr. Lawrence, from me, that he's done for us women what Abraham Lincoln did for the slaves."

Yes, women he knew—profoundly. He felt like them and felt with them when he wrote. But the spirit of man he found elusive, it retired from him, secret and uncommunicative. It hid within a further

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darkness, beyond the world of the Mothers that Goethe had found with the aid of Mephistopheles. Thus frustrate in his introspective perception Lawrence vainly strove to come at it, baffled as he was; it lived for him and moved him.

But against that bitter remedy for the world's wrong which his progenitors had swallowed and poured out to their children in turn—against Non-conformist Protestantism he was without a proper defence. It lay within his guard both in him and of him. In blood and nerve he showed its character. Protesting against it, he became the more Protestant as he proclaimed his ruthless negation to all that is of Christianity. It was as reckless as the automatic reaction of an old rage. As he said once of himself, an exact, remorseless, memory for words brought up the old context of every phrase whenever the Bible was quoted. For he had had much of it by heart. With that came back, of course, all the old hateful associations of a narrow-minded environment. He snarled at the memory of repressive expositions launched against the interrogations of inquisitive youth.

Moreover, born in him was that tough uncompromising fibre habituated to resisting authoritarian teachers and traditional ideas wherever they were to be found. In one's self must be discerned the true judge of good and evil, conscience divinized. Nothing was to be obscured by the mellowing of others' experience. There was no tolerance for Lawrence, no give and take. No! He was the preacher trying all things, enduring the burden of the world and its bitterness, spitting out in scorn that which offended his palate.

For, truly, Lawrence was an ascetic with a message

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to proclaim. His fragile health on the one part, set him at odds with the burning sense of power within him. Towards real strife and complete conquest, writing seemed to offer so faint a response. His means, he felt, failed to give any channel for the outpouring of the energy that rocked and disturbed him. He cried aloud to the whole world. And in the last days he came to have the grim, lean, ragged look of a prophet from the desert.

Or should one say that he took on the look at times of the workworn miner? For that was one side of it. A weary red-bearded man with a lean, acrid smile, sardonic from his deep understanding of the old earth and its inner secrets. He had delved deep. Bright eyes, sheer and hard with the luminosity of mountain streams, gleamed from beneath a broad ancient rock of a forehead, scarred with thinking. And over it hung a sweep of mouse-coloured hair.

Something of that responsiveness to the life of all nature which characterized his writing seemed to be stamped there in the very shape of his head—a boulder that had been warmed long days by the sun and chilled deep by hard frosts. It showed the stress of generations and of long, grinding, solitary thoughts. An ancestral, ancient inheritance of strife and resistance lay on it.

Nevertheless, within moved that sudden responsive mind which shines through all his books in queer lightning flashes. Yet too quick, too swift, were its reactions for endurance of long labour in persistent study and research. Always was he crying out for an immediate reply, for a result, a spontaneous, unconsidered, reciprocity in the world, in life, in man. Seas, hills, trees, gave something back to him, flowers gave

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much and animals too. He felt a part of himself reflected in them. A response came to his appeal.

Still not enough, never enough was there. He longed with that prophetic passion of the martyr for the full reply, the returning interest whether of love or hate. In his fellows he sought to arouse their admiration and affection if it might be, or, if not, their wrath. He cried out to the life in them to answer him, he challenged their belief, their hope. But they were always, always—so he felt—too tongue-tied by doubt, too cold and distant, too stolid in a carapace of personal interests. All dumb and unhelpful were they—and he needed help.

Yet he could rage, too, against his own wild changeableness. But in argument his talk was acrid, swift, searching. Uncompromising and hostile, always questioning, always denying, derisive ; as he loved his fellows, he smote them. And all the while to his fellows, to man as man, his heart went out blindly, and to the male rather than to woman. From man should—from him must—must come the resolution of the problem of this unrest in the world. In man lies the clue to that mystery of power and dominion that should resolve the puzzle of this our tangled life. He saw man great, adequate, complete, asking nothing, self-sufficient, resuming to himself all that comes and goes. An ideal, a marvel of all worlds.

Acutely, then, as he discerned and made plain the deepest reactions of woman, reading them in their transitions—as cherishing mother, passionate lover or longing virgin—still for him, the haunting wonder to be penetrated was that which lies about the hidden spirit of man ; Man whom he saw always in his writings as resistant, secretive, sudden and dangerous.

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The rock whence we are hewn, hard, but with the spark of pure fire to be struck from it.

Man the image of God, that Adam who gave names to all the beasts of creation before the admiring hierarchies of angels, that first Adam was his heart's chiefest interest. This was the symbol that moved him mightily. He wrestled with it. And he felt it to be significantly the rebel within himself that made so grievous division in him. His own close enemy that he found in his heart, springing up and unconquerably driving him whither he knew not ; that was Man, the primal, original self of his self.

It fled from him, eluding his nets of words. In the eyes of hillmen and all self-contained, quiet fellows who went poised and ready about their work, it taunted him. They seemed masters of themselves, peaceable yet ever ready for conflict with man or machine or all the elements. Tolerating all things except intimacy, intolerant of overclose contact they could be hard and genial both. They had spirit. How he strove to find and express its meaning. That was the greatest question to him, knowing it, feeling it, he demanded of his art how to tell it. A revelation lay there if one could show it whole to the world.

What, then, is it, this continence of power, hard-gripped, with the lightning in it ? What is its shape or name ? Genius ? Dæmon ? Spirit ? It is that which makes and seeks danger, going gently until the raging instant to burst explosive and terrific. Something that we call male.

No wonder that the Church, Catholic and Universal, avoided this ancient symbol of the primal Adam who was God's image and took rather for the symbol of the Church the spouse. Reunion should be through a

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new and virginal Eve. Single, separate and not quite social is the great one original man—man complete in himself. A formidable symbol is such a figure, of Man, with all things potential in him.

And such was the haunting shade of Lawrence's genius. Thence came that sensibility oversharpened. To feel himself the child of God was to endure being torn into fragments by the Titanic powers of the Earth. Perpetually responsive to the Dionysiac element of passionate enthusiasm, he must have, for his art, emotional reactions crying out for the warmth of desire and strife in things, the drive and fury of wild singing and the dance. Rather towards that than to a deliberate unification by contemplation was his natural way.

So all primitive communities—the Hopi Indians in New Mexico, for example—fascinated him with a queer delight by their close sensibility of interrelationship. They were complete, male and female together, and their tightly interwoven tribal psyche appealed to him, attracting him—him as the separated individual at odds within himself. Their communal interliving offered that respondent pulse of life, linking creature with creature, which seemed to be lost amongst his own resistant folk.

Apollo, and the unitarian simplicity in his aspect of divinity, was declined by Lawrence. For all that he glorified in the sun was the disseminator of light and warmth. Rather would he appeal for literary expressions to the drowsy god, the passionate dreamer who could urge the swaying group, with cup and song, to follow the orgiastic dance with the hooped satyrs, who had in his train the nymphs and the leopard car and the garlanded thyrsus surging.

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The sense of an ecstasy of companionship held him. He felt need of that which men who work and march together gain for the soul's contentment as their bodies move and sweat in a common endeavour and communicated effort. A communion was what he wanted and one which would draw in all people—all life indeed. With every living creature he cried out to exchange, to give and take. Yet withal keeping himself jealously. Still he sought a way of union and still he declined the mystical singleness of the life of retreat. Though he travelled, changed from country to country, climate to climate—so long as there was sun—and had wholly new social orders surrounding him, yet he still remained haunted by the problem of the self. Most free, perhaps, was he when he really did manage to come close on himself. In Australia as he told of it in *Kangaroo* there was an approach to liberation, and there he speaks of himself most clearly and openly.

Philosophy of the mystical kind had always an appeal and hung on the edge of his consciousness as a matter of quick interest, for debate and for question and argument. He sought, admittedly, a technique of liberation which would be more adequate than the formulæ of the occult schools.

And so he was vastly taken by the symbolism of the figure of the Great Man in the stars—the Macrocosm. He declared it gave him a feeling of that sense of liberation and freedom which had disappeared with the coming of the belief in a salvation which must be attained in another world. To his opinion this soterological scheme had followed on, and usurped, the place of the previous theory of simple re-birth, a revivifying descent within one's self. Such a regenerative ceremonial was not otherworldly but was close knit into

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this life. It meant more and fuller life here. The ritual brought release from this—our prison within the bonds of old habit.

Something he sought such as this symbol indicated—something, he declared, beyond the close limitations of the Jewish moral and religious purpose which had lain, dead, so long upon our life.

All Lawrence's philosophy was deeply affected by the idea of the mystical body. In certain writings on Vedanta he had come upon it but, no doubt, even more in conversation, for he had spent some time in Ceylon with friends, the Brewsters, who studied and practised Buddhism. In fact, he had travelled widely with them. But though he knew of the Eastern version of the sevenfold principle, the early roots of the idea in Astrology were unfamiliar to him.

As his reading was irregular he had none of the capacity of the student, properly speaking, for digging down to the fundamentals of his subject. Also his irritable temperament tended also to drive him on to and over difficulties. He reacted readily and brilliantly to suggestions, finding them everywhere about him. Perhaps this was what he took to be his function as a thinker. But his reactions were often too sudden and violent to effect any deep impression on his problems and their solution. Acute as was his intuition, he had the usual trouble with that faculty, which can lead, at times, to blatant error.

So, therefore, he was ready to protest that his philosophical essays must be read with all their contradictions and lack of system taken for granted—repeating Whitman's proclamation of innate self-contrarities.

But' once he had dipped into the subject of the body and its relation to the true man, and the belief that in

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it his full powers slept or were obscured and must be brought to activity, thereafter it often, perhaps always, motivated his imagery and defined his method of approach in psychology. He caught there a glimpse of that profoundly simple ancient idea of man the microcosm and the pattern of the universe. With that man he had seen the vision of himself mirrored in the star-spattered skies. In him, as in those skies, was necessity, order, rule, and there, too, were certain subtle deflections, matters for the wise man to ponder and comprehend.

It made a medium, he felt, for response to the world outside, did this Anthropomorph. Here was wisdom to be found—in the name, the number and the image of man. And his body was a mystically sealed document, seven-sealed by fate, stamped with the supercriptions of the powers of bondage in the world.

Urgent to find release, he fumbled at the seals. He sought release for the power that swept through him and smote him and rent him and would not let him loose except in gusts of wonder-filled words. But he wished—how he longed—to show himself visible and awful to his fellows knowing and manifesting himself as the true man. Not that one—the human—who crept and halted and was subject to malady and accident, not man in torment but man triumphant. He knew himself to be spell-bound, waiting for that most powerful name—the great word—to come upon his lips and bring release from all the shadows of thought.

Ardently he sought it, this key to unlock the seven-fold bond, discussing and arguing, yet querying all the later ways, whether Buddhist or Christian, as being poisoned with too much of the overconscious thought that is continually rising up and up, draining the life

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into the pallid brain. Where he asked was the way to this true power that the wise and great sought of old—and found he did not doubt—before the days when man stooped to require help to his salvation, before the Orphics and all the others who came with saviours for men, Adonis, Attis and all.

/ No, no; somewhere within us are our gods, imprisoned within ourselves, and there shall we find them if we seek aright. In a common bondage do we live, and are fettering each other. Power lies in man and in his belly and loins are its deep places. Lordship and rule in himself he must attain or stay a starveling slave. ✓

His sense of this power and fullness in the body of the earth seemed instinctive, enfolding him almost unconsciously in the drama of the old outcast and buried gods, those Titans, those giant red children of *Mother Earth* who, indestructible, await their occasion beneath the bosom of their mother Ge, burning until the great instant when they shall be called forth to avenge her unending wrong upon the cold divinities of the mountain tops and the upper air. As he knew them, in his own clay, they were to rise and stretch themselves, shaking down the narrow temple built in the newer ways of the last few thousand years and, spreading out their mighty arms to the ends of heaven, clasp in their hands their reconciled father in the wide sky.

In that fashion, the old syncretism of myth, built into the starry figures of heaven, came to suggest a possible access to a knowledge of the way of dominion that lived once in man's mind. Yes, once there had been, he believed, a proper understanding of the ways within and a science of the soul to which the vague old

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tales of magic pointed. Pointing, alas, to days as far off as Atlantis.

That the astrologers might have something to say of this, and that in the records of this widespread basic system for so much of antique religion might exist some relics of this knowledge, excited his interest. But it was difficult to him and baffling. Complications in rule and involved complexity of scheme in theoretical psychology and esoteric practice had left entanglement and distrust in his mind—both were there. He could hardly accept the old simplicity and its sequence of development as the astrologer's system of the heavens expounded it. He wanted a myth that could be set to work at once.

Still, he agreed that it really meant something to him, this figure of a man that they had set in the heavens; the man who, in the space enveloping the earth, stretched himself out through the great images that mark the year's passage. Along the twelve signs of the Zodiac, Aries, the old sign of the Vernal Equinox, was at the head of this man; the Bull, Taurus, his neck; the Twins, shoulders and arms; the Crab marked the place of chest and lungs; Leo, the heart; Virgo, the middle of the belly, the omphalos; Libra, the lower belly and the loins; Scorpio, the genitals; Sagittarius, the thighs; Capricorn, the knees; Aquarius, the legs and calves; Pisces, the feet.

All these were symbols of the powers ruling the various parts of man which themselves pertained to groups. Feet, legs, thighs were the parts of simple action, of the physical movement of getting about. The part sexual was Scorpio. Libra and Virgo were conceptive, relating to generation, but in them already were the beginnings of the wisdom of percep-

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tion. It was an ascent from the feet. The scale of mental reintegration began in the triad, Scorpio, Libra, Virgo ♏♎♍. Here lay the potential solution of that mystery lying about man's beginnings, for the astrological tradition wove into them the myth of Eden and of Eve and Adam and the Serpent. They were established here in the cycle of man and the created world and given a significance in the twelve-staged cosmological myth of the world's concretion about the human being, the fall of man.

First there were seven stages in this descent, Aries to Libra. So, therefore, did Libra represent the seventh day, the Lord's rest, the place of the Balance. And following that came the sign Scorpio, marking the place where sex was precipitated into the world's economy. Here in the third of the mysterious triad was made manifest the Fall. And the seventh, the mystical Balance, was the intermediary between the Scorpion and the Virgin signs which, in the body, indicated phallos and omphalos.

Such was the order of the Æons—the days of creation—during which life came to man—our life as we live it. A progression to exfoliation or introversion, or is it, both, concurrent. Thus is it told in that obscure myth of the children of Adam, the Kabbalistic myth of the offspring of the stars. And there is defined—in obscure symbols, of course—the way down from the heavens and also the way of return to a rediscovery of the world's first wonder. Such, we may take it, is the magical mystery of an exploration leading back to the place before sun and moon was, that other land where lived the spirit alone and thence sent forth the creative word. A journey therefore through time in a faculty

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of memory rediscovered, showing forth the path to the very beginning.

An astonishing myth this—the tradition of a master memory enduring in the body of man and in all his limbs, the hidden reminiscence of all time which has the keys to its secret written in the stars of the sky. And something of the clue to the mystery lies in that gate of the search which for each of us is symbolised in the seventh sign *Libra*, the point of balance, and that place intermediate between generation and conception, between motion and repose, whence we start on the inward search for our origins.

For in the symbol of the first man the sign of the scales lies between the genitals and the point of conception the navel centre of the prenatal life. Once this gate to the fortress of the merely animal man was conquered, then the wonder of redemption by victory over the lesser self might be made. Through and by self-examination, in a rigorous calm of contemplative interior regard, came liberation from the self-assumed bonds of mortality and so was found the way back to the immense wonder of eternal things.

They tell of it as a conquest, or at times describe it as a liberation, of the dragon that lies hid in every one of us. Within its coils is bound the sevenfold power of the true man, not the puny being, timorous and shrunken that is mortal, but the great undying creature who is master. Yes, master of the dragon, the creature of wisdom—the wise serpent who first told the mysteries of the tree.

In their scheme of the world-made man, the old astrologers defined the order of these limbs and correspondent symbols. They had a certain sequence. It was an old, old system and Lawrence, who had

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come upon a certain version of it in Vedantist writings, seized upon it in the hope that it would clarify his suggestion of a back and forth movement from spinal ganglia to nerve complexes in the sympathetic system that he propounded in *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*. It must fit. But it would not, of course. The old ideas were complicated, they had been transmitted from land to land and they had changed also in course of time. Where lay the true version? There were the seven planets, rulers of the "humours," the moods of mankind, masters of the seven seals. Perhaps they gave the key. But which of their attributes was to be taken? Here they were "exalted," there they "ruled," elsewhere "joyed." And they did not run in order from beginning to end of the Zodiac, they started part way along.

Ah well, this interpretation of the secret world of starry seals offered difficulties. The old theories of seven planetary masters throned in man's spirit gave matter for thought equal at least in its difficulties with the false simplicity of the discovery that man's troubles lie in the multitude of our conflicting desires, even though these are bound down to the procreative function in original motive.

But, to be explicit, there is in this arrangement of the Zodiac, a rule and order that belongs to the belief in a way of descent and return for man's spirit. It has its definitive symbol in the sign of the Balance, image of justice and of the gate between the worlds. It returns from there up and up ascending to the pure dominance of the mind in Aries, and the prophetic vision of its bridal in the future—called in the Apocalypse the New Jerusalem.

Its stages go by Libra and Virgo and so on to the

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first sign Arics, signifying the head. On the way upwards the new regenerated spirit proceeds by way of the release in sequence of the seven great ganglia, which are the knots of the mystical serpent that binds man to the way of life and continual return. This is described often enough in works called occult, and methods for introversion and contemplation are given. Ways of attainment.

In Lawrence's system of thought these nervous ganglia meant much. To plunge the mind beneath the surface of conscious reactions and feel the responses of the lower organs—to think with them—gave him that sense of a great world of mysteries to explore within the body which so enlivened his writings.

Really, he sought that place within, so often pictured by the Egyptians, where beside the balance sat the god. And he saw it as a place to attain power, dominance and kingship. He wanted to be Osiris—to be the god—for that end was his search to find the great centres of force for rulership which give the great Plutonian mastery of the underworld. Not for him to await all this in another world afterwards; his temper demanded a salvation and a new way of life here and now, a magical transmutation. It must be here, manifest, effective, immediate. Had it not once been known as more than a vain aspiration? Its records were there. Could we not find it again? Yes, find its secret and be lords of ourselves and life. But here! here! Now! At once!

A sufficiently familiar idea in talk, therefore, with him was that of an order of centres of nerve activity in man, controlling or subduing a great power, serpentine, dragonlike force that lies within every

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human. This matter formed the background of those psychological studies of his on the "Unconscious." Some, too, of these ideas appear in the original chapters on "Classical American Literature" when they appeared as magazine articles. Later, in book form, he cut them down, and explaining his reason for deletion he said that he felt "the esoteric parts should remain esoteric." He was not satisfied with his previous scheme of interacting centres, they were difficult to get at and stayed obscure.

As he had read with strong interest an American interpretation of the Revelation of John where it was treated as a document offering a clear parallel to the Vedantist method—written by a Platonist—he was ready to accept in it seven sealed centres in the body, a psychological dragon and so on. And he liked its thesis of an initiation document, giving in symbol a system for the conquest of the dragon by release and control of seven ganglia of nerves.

In his mind there was a prepared ground for the astrological symbol of the great man in whom lived Time, a unique being who was mirrored in mankind below—reflected and alive though in division. This perduring figure, a Time-Space concept of a Father of Men, the great protoplasm Adam, caught him.

It was this side of the symbolism of the Apocalypse that drew Lawrence's interest in my manuscript of the "Dragon of the Alchemists." Such was the title of a long series of chapters of which only the introduction appeared under that name. Later, more of it came into print as *The Dragon of Revelation*.

He liked and clung to the notion that an initiation system was defined therein which accorded with the Buddhist rule, or at least was reasonably near it in

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principle. Unfortunately the process as it had been described required that the symbols of the horsemen and the seals should receive a little adaptation, some pushing and hustling to take their places. However, Lawrence did not like the particular morality inculcated by either John or the more Eastern occultists.

Apart from these minor difficulties it offered a considerable clue to the ancient practices, and as he said St. John obviously worked outward in his cosmic vision from his own psyche ("his physical organic, nervous and cerebral psyche," Lawrence termed it) and expanded it to the stars. But John's definitions belong all to the cosmic body, the heaven of stars. He continually refers back to their symbols as direction points in his drama of the search for the end of heaven—the kingdom celestial within the soul. All his chief symbols are nailed to the heavens.

Yet still, and continually, Lawrence found the man of flesh and blood came in the way, the man John, whose views were so very pietistic, whose moralistic tags aroused Lawrence to frenzies of indignant denunciation. He demanded to know if they revolted me also—I was taken aback at such a question. I had passed them by, I explained. They seemed to me to belong to the current jargon of a group, phrases once meaningful that had run on as definitions—as formulæ. He protested to the end, even though he admitted that reactions from him, youth still clung about the Biblical phrases and texts. It was "Jewy" and "chapel" to him always. It was smug, asmirk, and with sanctimoniousness lurking about.

Then, too, he did not like the idea of "ascent" or "uplift." What he wanted was not conquest by upward striving. It could improve nothing, for it

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already had gone on beyond its measure. We have too much of the head—of the cerebral nowadays. We need to get back to foundations. He declared for the great descent, for no more Logos, no more brain-stirring, but a new age with a downward return to the great dark centres, past the diaphragm and the navel, where was to be found the throne of power and the sceptre of rule.

Persistently he reverts to his passional, emotional man of flesh and blood whom he considers to be in the most urgent need of salvation. In fact, he was in despair at the continued loss as he saw it in human sensibility, in sensuous awareness, in æsthetic, in everything belonging to the glory of the body and its senses. Things sensual and æsthetic Lawrence would hardly have bothered to differentiate, but he would certainly insist that they should be sufficiently splendid to be worth while. Yet somehow his grasp did not consistently hold the sense of strife as part of the duality in life and inevitably bound up in it ; though conflict was so near and so continual in him.

The continuity of that division within he underestimated. Its profundity, insofar as it applied to himself, he never troubled to realize. Striving to overcome it by, if need be, outcaching the whole world, he fell inevitably, then to return baffled to the bosom of the earth, his refuge.

That there is war in all the members of man he knew, and he appreciated that in this knowledge lay the whole history of mystical research. To the new world a way is opened by these conflicts, through these victories won is consummated in the end the complete reversal of that original history of the garden. In that mythical paradise in Eden, garden of the

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soul, was first unfolded the drama which would only be resolved when two again shall be one. And we live the long dream of the sleeping Adam that shall be finished when, once more, he remembers who he is and so, awakening, shall be whole and complete.

For within man—that mysterious creature Every-man—is a timelongs division. In each of us is something of father, something of mother—man and woman, positive and negative, an I and a ME. All are names, vaguely defining that which, within, makes up a duality of object and subject. We the person seen and the individual seeing to ourselves are both positive and obvious and negative and hidden. Each finds all this as he seeks to regard himself within that interior world. And always is he confronted by the problem of difference between the seer and the seen which co-exists with the fact of identity between seer and vision. I look, consider, think upon myself.

Mystical ideas, introspective notions, certainly had a powerful effect on Lawrence. He reacted to them because he himself had made far journeys in the land of imagination. Not that he had accepted them readily; he never accepted anything in thought or opinion. The more it interested him the more ready was he to spring upon it, pouncing with teeth and claws to worry and rend it.

But, such as they were, they conformed in some degree with his experience and came urgent to his ear with echoes of voices telling of a true enduring life in that universe within and of a great realm to be found and ruled by the man who is, in his own right, King.

Beyond all, what he desired most to know was the history—the real true myth—of the descent of man

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into this life's bondage of the spirit. Why did he come from heaven? What had he left? Towards what did he purpose journeying? Such answers as were given by the Neo-Platonists he took to beg the question a juggling with words, telling of nothing sufficiently significant.

Plenty of indications of the way of ascent exist to tell of that path of return to the celestial country, the starry land. But as for the scheme of beginnings—how came about that embrace of the dragon who encoiled the figure of the first—the bisexed man? Or on the other part, what was the mysterious triple communion in the garden between woman and snake and man from which it would seem came the discovery of seed and its purpose? Was it that which aroused fear in the God of the garden, and brought the condemnation to labour the ground for Adam, to spin and bear children for Eve.

Adam before had budded off, dividing himself to make Eve. Now they had been condemned to expiate their knowledge of good and evil by the consummation of difference in their sex. Eve had learned the secret and mystery of seed from the serpent and they must labour for bread. But as the solution of all the woes they had brought into the world came with the new and true vine and the Dionysian joy.

Liberation and freedom were the words that always came to Lawrence as explaining his sense of the feeling given by the idea of the man beyond man. But that the great myth of the star path leading to universal liberty should be found to exist most fully in a canonical book exasperated him. He wanted one from outside the fold; a pagan document of revelation

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And but that the labour of discovery deterred him he would have battled for some other source.

But nothing would keep him from raging again and again at the comfortable words of piety in John's Revelation,—what he called his Jewish snuffle. He refused to believe that such a writer could be the originator of the book. Who was the original author, the maker of its system—its plot—was his query, and he hastily dismissed the suggestion that it expressed the understood teaching of a *science* of the stars rather than what we know as religion ; the moralities were of personal predilection and part of the new teaching.

Not so for Lawrence : someone, some great writer, earlier than John, had passed that way recounting the vast swing of the universe across which the spirit stormed its path from underworld to skiey heaven. John had merely redressed it, perhaps lopped and distorted it, for the convenient use and justification of the new community.

In the latter days just before his death, when I sent Lawrence a copy of the book of Enoch as exemplifying the simple astronomical Apocalypse having no salvation theories to expound, he approved it cheerfully, yet for all that he went on writing his comments on John's Apocalypse.

Whatever may have gone to the making of that Judæo-Christian screen, beyond it there was, he agreed, a pagan document or a body of teaching telling of an immense splendour in life. It revealed a man of wonder standing upright with his head among the stars.

But for Lawrence this glory lay in his separation from the uniform buzz of the golden hive. Heaven,

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he felt, must be dull—pathetically so—a place to escape from. In the descent lay the real splendour, in that down-pressing life which sought generation and centred itself below the midriff—a movement that joyed in the body. He would hail Man who broke from heaven and made the world; a Lucifer who separated, declaring that his multitudinous children should build towers to storm the skies. Aye, who would have daughters fair enough to distract the Angels from their abstract joys of contemplation towards the Godhead and bring them plunging down.

That was it; he was caught and disturbed by that vision which has held the greatest poets—and the lesser ones too—the vision of Lucifer son of the morning, child of God, who fell—nay, stormed—out of heaven. And the question that enchanted Lawrence was about the desire that took him forth and who truly he was, that immortal figure of beauty and horror, and, further, who he is now, he who separated from his father's house to become lord of all the world?

This fascination and wonder on a time overwhelmed Milton's piety and it gave, in *Paradise Lost*, a vaster splendour to the poet's hell than ever his Paradise attained. And Blake knew it too, when he told of the angel whom he adjured for his inhumanity and falsity and the devil who was his good friend, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

Well, Lawrence could not admit much liking for either of them, either Blake or Milton. For him the old, old pagan world was lost with the coming of the Orphic soterological belief. And he resented the idea of being saved.

Probably much of his interest in the essays in which I defined the Alchemical dragon came from their

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But once inside the old rectory where I was living his delight burst out in that high nasal singing voice of his. He was pleased with the place, its oak floors, adze-hewn, black with time and old polish and showing the rippling lights that only such solid wide floorboards can give, took him greatly. And the churchyard wherein it stood with the gravestones up to the very windows, the old well in the depth of the cellars vaulted in at the end of a long stone passage. They made the background for a tale. Of course the house was too big for my purposes and he seemed grieved at the waste of the fine Georgian place with empty rooms going damp. •

He had read the manuscript called "The Dragon of the Alchemists" and had come to discuss its production. There, in its first shape as he saw it, I had been accumulating a long assimilation of symbols and their astronomical significance to the purpose of commenting the Apocalypse of St. John the Divine. All had been got together—in the main—for the purpose of making a series of drawings to elucidate its symbols. It became a book by sheer accretion.

At that time he had proposed various devices for arranging its publication, one that edited by himself his American publisher should issue it. Edited, I fancy, meant in part written, for he had an insistent desire to amend, enhance and colour anything that deeply moved his interest.

Once he had decided to return to England he settled to come and see me and discuss the work to be done. He came—after a week or so lying up in London with a bad cold—travelling across England by way of his native Derbyshire. He came really to discuss the symbol of the dragon. He loved the dragon

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symbol—for its ubiquity I should think—it had met him everywhere in Old Mexico, staring out on him from old ruins, jaws gaping to hold doorways and gleaming here and there wherever he might be. It was a god there, a god he admired, and he wrote a book to it, *The Plumed Serpent*. It was divine to him as a being that was part of himself and representing so significant a power in man.

Maybe this had something to do with the annoyance he showed towards the author of the canonical book where the dragon comes in so formidably. How he stormed at St. John and maintained with the fullest extravagance of Laurentian rage the author's blasphemy against the great phallic urge to power and his intellectualizing of the force of life with its consequent progressive emasculation in the race. He had his interpretation definite; the dragon is the life bound in man's nervous system, the great serpent force.

Not only this of course, but every kind of thing he discussed in those winter days beside our fire, built high with oak logs that came from the surrounding slopes towards Wales. They were seasonable. A great frozen hill stood overshadowing the one side of the place—an old fortress—carved with trenches by the Romans. And fine and grim and hard it looked in the bright frost-sharpened air of January.

On the other side of the village stood a lesser hill of sheer stone which was half quarried away sliced through to the middle like a cake. Around it ran scattered houses until the woods began beyond to crown. We walked over its brow to come to them. He gave the place a sort of unwilling admiration, admitting its elements of the picturesque. But it was English, too English.

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Nothing ever restrained him from outbursts of sweeping indignation and condemnation, rushing towards snarls of contempt. But it was amusing, stinging, vivifying, arousing. He could not help the urge in him to impose his ego, but still it was without hypocrisy or suavity that he did it.

And not only had he that obvious quality of temperament, but something, one could feel, had long before torn and lacerated his conceit in himself and it would not let him rest. Maybe he was always troubled by the long strife with the deep-seated malady that killed him in the end. He refused to acknowledge its power and ignored its hold on his constitution—would not admit its nature even. Without that spirit of the fighter he could not have lived and worked as he did. It showed in his pounce and snarl in discussion as he veered about with queer swiftness into hostility. Thence came that note of desperation in all he did.

Yet almost his only real hatred was for dogmatic rationalism. Truly, he loathed thought of the over-disciplined and regulated kind that let itself drift into the mechanical routine of living or thinking. After all, we live by things that are but in part logical and our feelings are far more deep in moving than the neat and regular processes that can be clearly expounded. He said and lived that for all of us, making manifest what he could.

Well, Lawrence came back from Mexico to see what could be done about the people and things awaiting him in England. That was his attitude. He returned, he said, more by chance than of deliberate purpose. Mexico he liked and would have stayed in longer, but

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the drift of battles in the revolution made it difficult for him and dangerous.

Carrying about him that singular air of the colonial, the sun-scorched returning traveller, he jumped out of the train in Shrewsbury bright and brand new. Red beard looked redder and sunburn browner against the hardness and brightness of his eyes on that wintry English day as we walked, killing an hour between trains, in the old town. Curiosity about his own land—for the first few days almost strange to him—gave him an avid appetite to see and consider.

Talk of places delighted him, both to hear and to tell. He was full of tales of his travel and the vastness of forgotten cities, lost in wild places, overgrown and tumbledown and hard to reach even now, though once more found again. Up immense rivers they had journeyed to them, carrying their meat alive in the boat. A goat to be killed on the way. And when it was slaughtered the genitals were offered to the white woman as the chiefest delicacy. They were declined by his wife—by him also, no doubt, for he was by habit extremely sensitive in most things.

Yet even at that time, although a measure of success had come to him, a sort of intermittent rage burnt him up. For he had the sense of strife always upon his thought, perhaps because of the sharp danger that hung over at his heels, the warning of the cold that prostrated him immediately on his return. England he knew disagreed with him, its climate, chill and humid, requiring other powers of resistance than he possessed and a stolidity and bulk that he had not. So he disagreed with England.

But for all that, he was delighted with that wild Shropshire countryside, picturesque and broken with

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small hills rising to greater ones beyond. England was his own and he felt it within him deeply enough. Of course, even as he looked upon it he would hardly admit his liking. Still, he later wrote a novel about its landscape, with place-names from it, too, and the house in the churchyard with its front windows cheek by jowl with the gravestones came in beside other local matters.

Only a little of my enthusiasm about the beauty and interest of that countryside would he accept. And the people he could hardly tolerate. The good-natured curate, fat, hail-fellow-well-met, a helpful and simple-minded gossip for all the world, him he blasted with a few words. Of course the man was bovine, red-faced and naïve. What else would serve in such an outlying land on the edge of two countries? Religion in Lawrence's sense meant little enough to such a man. A creed to believe was all he required for himself or his flock, and a sufficiently simple duty to be faithfully performed.

As it was, things were sufficiently difficult since a new vicar had come into office over him and at that a born disturber of curates, a High Churchman and ritualist. Difficulty there was, because he had followed on one who had been Low Church and liberal to an extreme, in his views evangelistic and pacific. And now, since the new order, must my friend the curate, shame-faced, take his place in the procession about the church, self-consciously decorous with joined fingertips and wearing a great cope of gorgeous pattern, shining with embroidery, from which his ruddy visage shone forth like a ripe fruit.

Dear fellow, he walked, or rather paced, along like a schoolboy caught about some mischief and expecting

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disgrace. To assume a solemn pious and sacerdotal look was beyond his scope, although he had his own proper gravity at serious occasions. But the man was too hearty and naturally genial to take on sanctimoniousness on the instant. He was not eaten up with zeal, but Lawrence was and promptly blazed at the very sight of him. They were the two types of the English, antagonistic.

Next day following his arrival we set off for a walk, five miles or six, into the wilds of the border country towards the edge of Wales. We climbed the slope of Cad's Hill up through the native village reaching down the hillside. Quite un-English it looked, its one-storey, whitewashed thatched cottages scattered about here and there off the road with gardens about them. And native it certainly was, for it had little social connection with that part of the village that lay along the main road leading round the hills. There the inhabitants had a blonder, more Saxon complexion, over against the darker people up the hill, who were mostly Bennett by name, and the folk of the mined and quarried hillsides. It was an old, old land where lead had been got since Roman days from the various "beaches" among the hills.

After the village had ended we came up through a little wood, then by a lane with a stream and stepping-stones along its middle for a few score yards. Over the brow of the slope our path dropped again into the woods by a narrow tree-bowered track, like a gully, always dripping with water except in high summer or hard winter.

Across the narrow gauge railway, running downhill to the works at the foot of the slope, we came on the long rise through woods which surrounded us for the

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next mile or two until we came out at the corner where, from the path's brink, one looks down the inlet into the hills upon the works and smoke of Snailbeach. Here, by the very edge of the moor, is the tiny chapel of Lord's Hill and from its walls stretches the open heathy land, rolling towards the great white masses of stone crowning the summit. But to us, as yet, invisible beyond the great curves of the moorland they stood, the Stiperstones.

We tramped along by the brow of Crow's Nest Dingle until we came to the rough ground covered with chunks of limestone that culminated in the great row of white rocks at the top, the biggest of which was called the Devil's Chair. This one we climbed—a mass as high as a house—and from its top looked over towards Wales and Montgomery, gazing out upon the old border marches of the land of Powys.

Lawrence liked the name—the Devil's Chair—for the stone on which we stood. And there we talked of the great hilltop rocks with similar names that are found all over Europe as seats of the changeful gods. Climbing and creeping through a hole in its back we stood on the part which appeared from far away to be its seat. And certainly as seen from the plain towards the Severn river it did look like an immense chair.

And besides, as these rocks marked the highest point of the hills in the vicinity, the point where the cloudbursts gathered that sent down floods to the valleys below, this huge mass of stone justified its title in the popular view. It was the place of power and storm—formidable. There was a gloomy terror and dark enchantment about it, for the low walls marking the foundations of a storm-wrecked hamlet stood beside the moorland path approaching.

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Away and away as we stared into the sun-streaked winter land a tiny place smoked in the distance. There were no factories towards the west, nothing much was there except farms. But Lawrence sniffed the wild wind on that hilltop and cried out : " There is never any clean air in this country. It smells smoky to me even here. Don't you think so ? " That pale, faint drift of smoke as far off as we could see, miles away, and all wild Wales before us. He challenged it as he challenged everything.

Of the tales that he told over the fire there of evenings, the book of the *Plumed Serpent* gives many as incidents and background, and with that the Indians of New Mexico were most in his mind. He was fascinated by them as he had seen them in their city not far from his farm at Questa—which is near Taos, I believe.

What arrested his attention in Shropshire comes into the tale of *St. Mawr*, though there is not much given in it beyond the chief elements of place-names and geography. Even the season of the year is altered, and most of the characters are imported into those surroundings by their author. However, it provided much entertainment to the inhabitants for, later, when the book appeared, recognising two or three places and one person, they proceeded to follow up clues and amongst themselves, I fancy, discovered the identity of every other character in the story.

Something, too, of other matters discussed, such as the mystical body of the starry man may be found in the article upon Astrology mentioned earlier. When he left it was settled that he was to be back again in March from Germany, and with all the schemes discussed in working order—even started. But by that time difficulties in business had called him away to

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New York. Nothing was done and my MSS. came back from London, the matter seemed to have ended. A rare postcard from a discouraged Lawrence and another. Away in that far corner of the country I heard nothing except rumours sufficiently vague, until, once more residing in London, Lawrence's venture into painting came under discussion.

Thus in the year 1929, after missing an anticipated meeting with him in Paris, I got a message from his publisher there. He asked me to write and gave his address in Germany. Replying to my note he said that he wanted news—that he was unwell and had been so for a couple of years and that he was tired of it. He wanted to know, too, what had happened to the Dragon, for he remembered seeing some notice of its publication. Had it appeared in print, for he wanted to read it again : where could he get a copy ?

Then I had to explain that the title, "The Dragon of the Alchemists," had been used for the designs done to decorate the *Magnum Opus*. These had been made into a picture-book of figures, of symbols, taken from astrological and alchemical ideas; bound up with these drawings as prefatory essays were a few of the introductory pages of our old friend, the much-discussed manuscript that he had read in Mexico.

Again, as long before, he began to urge that the work should be published and asked if I had still the copy of the Dragon as he had known it. But in that interval of time it had been reconsidered, rewritten in parts, rejected in others as too complicated and esoteric, too occult. And, moreover, it had been put on one side as a subject over-difficult for more than a small public and unprofitable to publish for lack of a popular audience.

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However, he kept on in his quest for at least the fragments that remained. Having the ear of a wide public he suggested a "spangled" introduction—then next he would see to its production as a joint book, he wrote. So in the end I agreed to work on its reconstruction and set to sorting out the scraps of old chapters that remained after the deletions they had suffered on re-reading.

At intervals in the autumn of 1929 I sent portions along to him and near the year's end, as I had some affairs to look to in Paris, he suggested that I should go south and stay in Bandol for a little while to discuss the prospective book with him.

In Bandol he was fixed, it seemed. He had decided in the summer that they would take a house in Florence, but it had been impossible; something milder and more equable was necessary. During his stay in Paris and whilst the disturbance in London over his paintings was going on, the illness of which he complained seemed to have caught a firmer grip on him. The wrangle about his pictures had distressed him. Police Court proceedings about their destruction conjoined with the strain of a piratical raid or two on his novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, had been disastrous in their effect on his unstable throat and lungs. The dry and dusty air of Paris had helped the mental irritation. Later, in Germany, as I heard, he had collapsed desperately.

So there was he in the South of France held down by it. And he took a villa, "Beau Soleil," for six months' rest and to recover. They knew the place and liked it, for it had agreed with him when they had been there before. And the little house named after

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the beautiful sun that he adored, praised and glorified. It sounded pleasant.

When I left Paris that November night it was as foggy and as chilly as is London of that season. But the next morning, at Marseilles, was full of sunshine, light and warmth. How ridiculous my heavy overcoat seemed. And all along the coast that morning beside the railway was the fabulous blue of the Mediterranean, either that or sun-browned earth, palm trees and cactus plants. What a land ; ancient, stony, tumbled amongst rocky little hills, but warm. Yet it could change quickly enough to mist and rain and hard-blowing wind as I found before I left, for I was caught for a wetting in the walk from Beau Soleil villa back to the hotel the day I left.

Bandol itself is a small place, a little town yet abuilding with a few score yards of sand at the centre of a rock-bound bay, just enough stretch of it to make a *plage*. This is its asset as a summer pleasure resort, the bay with its patch of sand guarded by a jetty and a dozen cafés looking out on it. Rocks on the seacoast there are plenty, which are used as foundations for hotels that house visitors in the season. But in the winter these are empty in the main. The town is occupied by its own folk then, except for a few foreigners, the wandering invalids from the north and those few other strangers who live all the year round in the villas.

These villas are still being built every day, a little more and a little more they creep up, one and another. Splashed about here and there, of every size and shape, they gleam with all those sharp colours customary in Neapolitan ices. Sunshine makes them glow cheerfully along the slopes of the grey-brown countryside, but on

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a dull winter's day with a dash of rain and mist they look sadly ephemeral against the hard landscape. They seem as sugary as sweetstuff, and as soluble and frail.

All the slopes up beyond the town here and there, even among the fungus-like villas, the ground is divided up into cultivated strips tilled by peasant folk. There they work all the time bent over close to the earth day in day out, loosening the soil with their very hands, watering it actually with their sweat, holding it together with stone terraces on the steeper places. Their way with it is strange—affecting even—to Northern eyes. How close they hug it, intent, concentrated, man and woman turning it over with short-handled, large-bladed hoes, both of them at work in a slow, easy way, but none the less unremitting, urgent, pressing and scratching it into more life and productivity. Flowers and vegetables they grow amongst those stones; indeed, anything profitable they drag out with the sun—the friendly sun—to aid.

There alongside Lawrence's villa in late November bloomed a whole field full of narcissus flowers. Brilliant against the dark pine copse beyond, they stood, day by day coming to fuller profusion and glory. Even on the dullest of days and in the rain, that field shone and flashed. And sitting on the veranda of the villa on sunny days it radiated its pure clarity of colour through the whole air, reflecting back the sun's cool winter light.

How Mrs. Lawrence gazed with round eyes and round mouth in ecstatic longing—longing just to creep through the wire fence and come back again with an armful. They could be begged from the grower, of course, but that would be no fun. The way to enjoy

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them was to gain them by skill, cunning, adroitness, coming back in warm laughing triumph from the expedition with face splashed with dew from the mass of blooms in one's arms. But after all they could be bought cheaply enough of a morning on the *plage*; she consoled herself with the thought, and the field of bloom remained unravished until they were cut for market.

At the extreme point of the cape that guarded the little bay of Bandol lay the villa they had taken. It was protected from direct sea-winds by the little pine wood that grew on the very verge of the rocky shore. Walking out from the town towards it the road took one behind the hotels and villas built into the rocks at the edge of the bay and then, coming out beside the water a little way from Villa Beau Soleil, became a lane—a path—by the water's edge. At one's feet as one walked the sea—the Mediterranean—ran amongst the rocks, slapping sharply at the hard edge of the land. One forgot the enormous advertisement at the lane's corner directing to the Splendide Hotel, except that it marked the proper turning in a tangle of similar side roads.

When I got off the train at Bandol station Earle Brewster met me. Lawrence, he explained, was not well enough to come along. He took me to the hotel, where he too was staying, and after lunch we strolled along to the villa. A very different Lawrence from the one I remembered sat on the *terrasse* awaiting us in the warm afternoon sunshine. He rose from his seat as we came up the steps; he rose slowly and turned towards us. The tall, sharp-shouldered figure was exaggerated now to the extreme of fragility. Before, he was slight but very brisk and alert, now he

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was frail and tired. Fatigue and weariness lay on him.

Live and direct were his eyes even yet, and firm in gaze. And the ruggedness of brow and head with hair tumbled across above the eyes was still the same. But the heavy head overweighted those thin shoulders in the wrinkled blue flannel jacket. Colour, too, had gone out of his beard, its redness had darkened, the vividness, length, the aggressiveness had gone.

A few days before, as Brewster had explained, Lawrence had been desperately ill and they had been truly alarmed at the condition he had fallen to. He was worn down beyond all seeming. Every day Brewster went along to massage him with oil and he told with distress how emaciated and martyred was his body. It had become terrifying in its meagreness, just like, as he described it, one of the haggard, mediæval, carved figures of the crucified Jesus.

And even when I looked at him the frailty of his limbs beneath his clothes made me afraid. The knee-bones of him showed tiny in his grey flannel trousers and his little flannel coat seemed corrugated by the shoulder bones beneath.

His voice, too, was tired, though it still had the same fluting note in it. For the moment he was worn down and subdued. But a few days later his spirit had risen again and once more he delivered his long monologues on people and things, broken with sharp questions, teasing, sudden, embarrassing interrogations. About acquaintances and friends of ours, people we knew, their ways of life, their interests, thoughts, prejudices and familiar interests he told, with all the queer humour and acrid penetrative analysis that was so characteristic of his conversation.

Spiteful, as Frieda Lawrence called it sometimes,

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and particularly when the names of certain familiar targets came up. When Wells was mentioned one day, for example, she called out to him: "Now don't be spiteful, Lorenzo," as he began an anecdote. It was one of Huxley's stories he recounted, I believe. But, of course, he went on only the longer for the interpellation and only the more sinister was the curious high whinny of a laugh that he gave when he had achieved the droll revelatory traits of character in his tale. A feminine-sounding laugh it was too, near to a cackle and old-maidish. Uncontrolled, something of sharp disappointment burst out in it, and of malice; ungenial it was, as if something baffled and sterile cried out in him.

But for all that, one had to admit real hard sense behind these mannerisms. However acrid his expression in judgment, there was penetration, accuracy and often remarkable exactness in his final summing up. A certain satirical turn, but with that a deep significance lay in his gossiping and jesting. He was a real tale-teller. His malice gave the piquancy and sauce to his tale, touching it with a gleam of that deliberate exaggeration in fact, which makes revelatory the penetration of true caricature.

Actually, and perhaps obviously, he had a remarkable feeling for the natural grotesque which exists in character and makes that variant from the norm lying in everybody. It gave gusto to the description of people in his conversation. As it existed in his books it was less obvious, less hard and direct, being interspersed with so much that existed peculiarly in his writing giving a quite feminine warmth and intimacy. Yes, he was more masculine in his talk than he was in his writing. Perhaps it would be better said

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that in his actions he was more positive and male, but in thoughts more feminine.

As he retold stories of which one had already seen a version in print—some from *England, my England*, as an example—giving the true names of people and places, the queer closeness with which the published story followed the original facts made one gasp. What hard penetration had been in the eyes he had cast upon the personal affairs of his friends. No wonder they had been perturbed when the stories had appeared.

How he had loved to pillory a father god in the household : papa dominant, affable, prosperous, alert, full of warmth and affection towards his daughters—and jealous, too, being a possessive god of the house and god of the garden. It had a bitter sense—this sort of fatherhood—not to his taste. Maybe had he possessed children of his own begetting he would have less resented the lordly dominance of pater-familias.

A jealous god he seemed to be to Lawrence, Eden's Lord. And he was suspicious of Jehovah. How Lawrence stood up for Eve—lived for her emotionally and strove to her justification so soon as he sat down to write. But not nearly so much was he of that disposition of mind when he talked. More obvious in his satire, perhaps more ready to jeer laughingly at both parties, but rather more on the side of his own sex, too—and even, it may be, more just and fair in the main issues between man and woman.

Tales like this he told for the company sitting after tea. His wife was German, his visitors were American, but there in the stucco villa on the Mediterranean sea there was about four every afternoon, English fashion. It was homely, too, even there, for the winter sun set

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early and there came a warmth of atmosphere to the cold evening light as we sat around the tea-table.

So when the Brewsters, his American friends, came he introduced them by means of his tales to far-off English circles and presented patriarchs and adoring daughters to them. Less frequently he told of riotous sons. Figures of old time they seemed, bearing all the characteristics of the age now just gone when families strove to breed masterful men and biddable women.

But with that, too, were gossiping stories about his own family and his youth where he clearly lived again, very often, in memory. The dominant figure of his mother, the striving devoted woman of the north country, informed it; all her voice spoke through him, and her estimates of the circle of relations gave the ultimate standard of their values.

Some days, at Achsa Brewster's instigation, he would be induced to sing his favourite old English songs. Whilst Frieda Lawrence played on the small upright piano in the corner of the room we others joined in a chorus or sang out the words of any tune that came up as the songbook's pages were turned over. Lawrence was particularly fond of one or two quaint country songs, one especially esteemed, "Turnip Hoeing," which he gave with a strong Derbyshire accent. Pleasant was the winter evening as the light died over the southern sea to the sound of the broad-spoken country words as he sang.

He was not too short for breath for that, indeed, but very often it showed as he talked, that weakness in his lungs and throat. He became breathless and his remarks died away in a kind of sighing aspiration. Lacking resonance his voice fell flat and without ring in it. It beat at one like the sound of a knock on a board.

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Most difficult of all to pass over without alarm and even horror was his incessant spitting, that in itself gave an atmosphere of fear and threat. He didn't cough loudly, but simply and carefully spat into an envelope. Once one's presence became familiar and he sensed himself secure from comment, he gave the slightest of coughs, an apologetic throat sound, and took out an envelope. These he had about everywhere from his ample correspondence, and they were kept to expectorate into. In his jacket pocket he kept them, and they were folded up when used and neatly returned into the pocket again. He would discuss his illness as if it were due to throat trouble from a bronchial cold—a weakness of the bronchial tubes that was difficult to overcome—and to get rid of; and it was tiresomely liable to recur. Only that, nothing more.

Mornings he usually lay abed and wrote in his room. ~~One entered through a large glazed double door from the~~ *terrasse*. But ordinarily it was not till the afternoon that I went, taking tea, and after a talk left at seven for my dinner at the hotel.

At this time the Brewsters were taking over a house called Chateau Brun, a few miles off. A pleasant, Provençal farmhouse, standing high up on a hillside. The man who farmed the land, working it right up to its very doors, lived a couple of hundred yards away. I saw him stolidly at work behind the house apparently ploughing the top of a low stone wall. It was a little containing wall holding together a strip of soil on the hillside, but from where I stood he, his horse and plough moved along the level of the wall top, diligent and pre-occupied. He never even looked up towards me.

One morning we all went by automobile to look at the new place, taking Lawrence with us. He

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pottered about and watched the painting and finally squatted on his heels by the fireplace, making a fire with twigs to dry the new colour-washed walls. He sat there feeding the fire with the bits of stick I carried in. Looking like a collier, he stayed all morning perched on his toes, elbows on knees. Frieda called out: "Look at Lorenzo sitting on his heels. He always does it—just like a miner." She seemed almost vain of his accomplishment.

Whilst I was staying there, of course, a certain amount of time was spent discussing the project of the book on Revelation and its symbols, for that was the main reason for my visit. He wanted opinions and urged for anything suggestive that could be used to define the place of the author, who and what he was in the new world religion. Perhaps it would be better defined to say that to displace the accepted author *was what he wanted*.

Still he held to the same point that had been in his mind when we had discussed the thesis of Revelation and its symbols years before. The matter held in suspension in the book fascinated him and the glimpse it gave of a great and splendid world order. But not the author St. John the Divine. No, no, he hated him. How he snarled at John's Christianity and refused him even the credit of having assembled together an old inheritance of stellar myths in the interest of the new-found faith. No, it was a work written long before Christianity, taken over and mauled about and plastered up with pious Jewy texts.

This was one notion he put forward. There were others, for he busily devised scheme upon scheme to eliminate the Johnisms—the sentiments and morals of the new religion.

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Of all the writers dealing with the origins of this Apocalypse he preferred Dupuis' version in the *Religion Universelle*. Not that Lawrence had read Dupuis, but I had, and gave him a synopsis of the argument. This was to the effect that in it existed the only document that had come down to us of all the secret cults, the sole survivor giving a full description of the Mithraic initiation with its symbols and figures. He liked this notion of an exposition derived from one cult and preserved as canonical and inspired by its foe. But his critical sense made him doubtful of it.

Well, after all, that to him was the grand idea, a pagan document uncovering all the secrets of the cosmos and revealing the mysteries of the heavens as they are imprinted upon the mind of man within him. Yes, in the end, did it matter much who told the story of the stars and the skies and the way through them to the mansions of new life in the many coloured city above.

Or that was a part of it, shall we say, for he was imbued with the belief—a Theosophical notion perhaps in its beginning—belief in an ancient wisdom now lost. He certainly was convinced that we no longer possess that great sense—which they had, he thought—a sense and conviction of the splendour and power of man and with that knowledge of the universal mastery of life that lay within him. Man has lost hold of that secret science of the interior world of the Microcosm and its correspondence with the outward one of the cosmos.

This opinion had driven him to write the two books, contesting some of the root principles of psychoanalysis. Those on the Unconscious. But here he was, and he admitted it in a measure, fumbling for a key,

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and however many true things were incidentally pro-
pounded in them, they had little method.

Somewhere in paganism, he maintained steadily, must—must exist a document definitive of its ancient way of thought and of its process. Explanation must be yet extant, giving the firm principles whereby they envisaged and absorbed the universe in whole and through which they attained the dark power to penetrate in thought to that underworld which is below our conscious level now. Man, he asserted, then mastered things not by thought of the conscious kind only, or so much, as by the thrust of the under-conscious will and desire in him. Thence came the pure physical mastery that set him upright on his two legs in defiance of nature's rule for the animal creation. Man has a pure physical poise that no other creature possesses, the power of balance, a sense of positive and negative, of good and evil—the beginnings of things as they are. Things are they that are conditioned by the sense of law and of an immanent justice belonging to man in man's world.

Sometime, somewhere, long before things became as they are, Man—a powerful ego, a force in life, a spirit of energy—had seen this world and the Mother—Nature—who possessed the earth and informed it with her own swarming life. Shining in her glowing beauty Man had seen her and swept down into the embrace of this mirror of his own desire to share the universe with her, to divide himself for her. And still Nature gazes in passion back to heaven reflecting its wonder; and each of us yet feels that yearning in us as we look up into the sky—feels wonder, worship and illimitable desire.

Man became part of Nature and was absorbed in

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her to become her master. He died in her to be reborn the child of her womb and the beloved of her heart. Was it thus that the first of angels fell—Lucifer star of morning?

It was to some such myth, with such a protagonist, that Lawrence subscribed in his heart. And he wanted a document from antiquity to tell of this, a tale long cherished in the heart of man. Not a tale of a fall—a failure—but as a glorious exploit and an escape from the less to the more and the better. It was heroic and divine in him, a defiance and a defeat of implacable powers by Man. Against the feeling of striving back to heaven, of climbing painfully there amid protestations of sin and of repentance for it, he reacted violently. As he said with grim humour in reply to a reassuring comment when he left Bandol and was taken from “Beau Soleil” to the sanatorium under doctor’s orders fearing—declaring—that it meant the end: “Our next good times together will be in heaven, I’m afraid—and I’ve never believed that I should like it.”

Not there for him, but in this world must be revealed the power and glory of man—and for ever and for ever. Too long! Too long these thousand years had search been made for a way into that other world beyond the grave—that heaven so vague and silent. Man, he believed, came into life to conquer it and we are wasting our time and diverted from our proper purpose in living as we think of achieving a kingdom in another world.

Why are we here? he asked. What do we suffer? Are we too helpless and weak to know our own situation? Is it not that even yet—undiscerning—with all the vast power within us reverting all the

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time to inward strife by our own foolishness: is it not, that with all this interior force directed to our proper ends we should live in the splendour of a true mankind, glorious and happy each and every one.

It was this idea of the mastery existent in Man, this vision of each man as the microcosm holding the pattern of the universe within himself, that held the deepest fascination for him. A man with all the wonders of the stars burning within him, born from the stars and native of the whole wide world from middle core to outmost deep, this was the figure and symbol that he hailed.

But that the old, old Gentile way of revelation should be discerned in the Apocalypse of St. John the Divine, and in that of all books most fully expounded, that was disagreeable to him. There lay the subject, he admitted that, but the author he hated. Somewhere must exist a better document, some old pagan ritual must give it more completely, more serenely. Yet where? Where else was it possible to find another unveiling of the secrets of heaven of the path through the stars? All the other apocalypses and rituals, Jewish, Greek and Egyptian, told too little or spoke in terms too vague.

For himself, it meant an explanation of that way out which derived as he postulated it from the myth of how and why man came into this world. The old pagan way had for Lawrence its special meaning and to him there had been back and away back a kind of Golden Age—Atlantean—his Hesperidean garden with girls and apples and the dragon all complete.

No doubt the strife went on in him really against the sacerdotal smugness of acceptance for which Christianity now seems to stand. It had turned rancid

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in his experience of living. From its past expositors and expounders, in his ears every phrase of the Bible acquired a snuffling intonation. However much the splendid order of symbol in its Revelation drew him, he fought off the book itself, declaring that there was in it a great pagan author spoiled by another—a usurper—who had nothing to offer but moralizations.

Powerfully as he was affected by the idea of religion the more wildly did he react against the depressed pessimism of the English sacerdoce and the protestant who has for so long set the moral before the spiritual. Morality of a strictly insular kind too. And unfortunately to his way of seeing it, this was implicit in the New Testament, in both Old and New in fact; he maintained the root of the trouble lay in them and the Jews together.

About that, however, which lay in Gentile tradition and in the system of thought and myth descending through these ancient civilizations amidst which Christianity sprang up, about that he was always urgent for knowledge. Yet with that desire went a singular impatience with the learned and philosophic method of approach. The Greeks themselves annoyed him with their method of enquiry. In their processes of logical search he believed lay a profound fallacy, for half the quarry for him escaped that hunting net. It meant a submission to the rule of material principles and lost the truer sense of the soul. Psyche herself was destroyed by these pinching laws. The primal Eros could never be brought back to ~~our~~ communion through such ways and means. For he it was, by whatever name he is known—he it was that Lawrence sought, he the divine original, the far-off divinity in whose shape man was made and whose

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descent was finally echoed, in the last days of paganism, by Apuleius.

That which so often is called occult or esoteric represented to Lawrence no more than a ground of thought, preferably it gave indications of a ground whereon might be established that method of discernment which he desired. He wanted a technique and a definite process whereby Man might know himself. And he wanted to escape from the way of thinking that obsesses our age, for all mechanistic over-rationalized processes he loathed, both physical and mental.

In snatches in his novels this appeared. But there perhaps because he declared himself without insistence and omitted the jeering outbursts of his essays. Fiction was his best means for giving this approach to the side of things called mystical—mystical in default of a better word. Psychical and spiritual are of no greater avail.

His sympathy for that obscure and dark sort of writing called occult, indicated in him a trend of thought that drove him to chart and sound the channels of the obscure and subterranean streams in the world of mind. But it was not from books that he derived his primary impulse to this study, but from introspective observation. He sought knowledge of something that there moved darkly but yet alive, haunting and magical, which he strove to know more clearly.

Yes, magic had a meaning to him, it was not a juggler's device. Acutely he sensed the vast power of imagination towards the making of a new age. Requiring a new way of life for the new time period that is coming on the world, he felt it in him to herald it and cry out news about the uprising of a new vision.

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Nowadays we are over-intellectual, he cried, and laughed savagely at the idea of an ascent towards an overwhelming super-metaphysical perfection. Pure thought was not for him, he had no use for it and did not believe in it. Nor could he abide uplift for mankind. To take man too far from his solid bases and his origins was a vain notion threatening disasters.

What he demanded was for man to get down to his roots and find the whole of himself again. Somewhere we humans had taken a wrong turning and, consequent on this, we had tried during centuries an unavailing theory. And it had brought us to be at odds within ourselves. Everything to-day is becoming externalized and sterilized and made dead by machines and such contraptions, and we need to get back to the point where we first lost touch with the old sensibility.

Let us be the finest creatures in the world, and that, to begin with, externally. We must dominate the other animals—as we can well do—by a power they can appreciate, lead them, outstrip them, be more beautiful and natural than they are. And somewhere, too, we have lost our sensibility to art which swiftly loses its effective relation to life. How—why—then, had man fallen to this vulgar delight in his own easy cunning and trickiness? When had these troubles first begun in him? Was it our new way of religion and the usurpation of moral principles as ruler of all others?

And so it came back round again to the old talk of the stars. Something, maybe, had been left in the books of knowledge and of fate written in the skies. There were dim symbols telling of primordial religious

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notions now faint and obscure in our minds. And so we talked of it now and again in the house called Beau Soleil in the south. Then he began to write of the 'Apocalypse of John. A lengthy prefatory discussion to precede the rewritten and unpublished chapters of "The Dragon of the Alchemists."

When discussions moved around the hidden things wrapped up in the works of Alchemists, Hermetists and the other practitioners of magical methods, he urged for some work that would give the significance of the entire scheme. All the time he was exasperated to find the theory depended on the exposition in a canonical work, a book accepted. He wanted something outside—heterodox at least or heretic or pagan, a challenger, an outlaw to deliver onslaught. ✓

It was a disappointment that no other existed that would be esteemed nearly so comprehensive, none that makes so adequate a synthesis of the myth and the science of the old world. Most of the other treatises surviving are slight, often they are deliberately vague or, alternatively, are obscured by interpolations and incantations. Consequently this book of celestial symbols, wherein were enfolded the earliest origins of Christianity, gave him mingled feelings—anger and interest and revulsion. But he could not abandon it. After those half-dozen years he returned to the problem again. A far inferior Apocalyptic book—*Enoch*—he approved, for its lack of moral sentiments, no doubt. It gave none of the prepossessions that were to dominate the new era when the lamb was slain—those two thousand years when the sun is exalted in the Fishes.

And even to the end he was embarrassed by an insufficient knowledge of the motions of the various

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parts of the heavens. It shows itself in some of the articles he wrote on philosophy and the cosmos, when he ventured on that side of the subject. He could not catch at the fundamental simplicity of the older theory of heaven's movements. Eluding him by reason of this misapprehension of motions, the scheme appeared complex and distracted his thought and vision into contradiction. I do not think he ever found it quite clearly. A simple map of the stars could not give the complications of pattern in time that they run through.

Yet, to Lawrence, always the great swing of the polar centre with the dragon stars circling about it was an amazing and stirring image. It seemed always new to him and significant of meaning—such a lot to his purpose if it could be brought into his way of feeling. But it never quite gave up its secret and *always the interplay of the stars of pole and dragon* with the rest of the sky baffled him.

These things of course came up again and again whilst we talked in the little villa's sitting-room or in the bedroom with its brass bedstead where he lay a-mornings. But he said little of what he was doing, stopping his writing and putting aside the exercise book in which he did his work without remark, as one arrived. In fact, he usually was secretive about his work in progress, whatever it might be.

However, before I left to return to London in order to prepare the last chapters of the book—the *Dragon of Revelation* as it was to be called—our joint work, he let me know that he had already written nearly twenty thousand words of introduction. But news from New York was bad and he could not decide to which publisher to offer the book. His confidence on the accept-

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ance by an American publisher had been sadly broken by the stock market collapse there. Could I find one in London? What form should the book take? All was in flux again.

When, after my work was finished, I suggested that it was time to decide, he had changed opinion again. He wrote that in his view the long introduction would not be suitable, and that he had done another, much shorter one, which he believed to be more suitable. Better for my purpose. One that I should prefer.

Plans again had to be changed. But before this new scheme had been more than agreed upon the last dolorous succession of collapses had begun. He wrote a note to announce the abandonment, unfinished, of his longer essay on Revelation, the probability of going into a sanatorium: "No luck," he wrote, on the postcard, which on its reverse bore the picture of a grinning tiger's head in colour—all teeth and tongue and snarl. A strange premonition seemed to hang about that deadly grin—it gave a shiver in its conjunction with his message.

But strange, and more strange, coming after this last endeavour to expound the book of the last things—the Revelation—after all the talk of the way of the seeking spirit-books discussed, planispheres examined and manipulated to discern the path through the heavens and the way of the little creature man back to the Father of stars—after this Apocalyptic strife to discern the course of the last Judgement and the ultimate secrets of the seven heavens—after writing to the last permitted instant until the work was ended by a specialist and a sanatorium. What then? Why, that of all things, the name of the place—the sanatorium—in Venice to which he was carried off should

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have been Ad Astra. Yes! from the house with the name of the divinity he loved and applauded, the house of the Beautiful Sun—Beau Soleil—he went to a house of Stars to face the end.

